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PROG 12/23/82
AMB:HWSHLAUDEMAN
POL:JAALLITTO:BK
DCM:JABUSHNELL
POL-4 AMB DCM, DAO ECON SCI, USIS MILGP DEA, CHRON

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
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AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
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PROJECT (5200000044)

DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Gen. P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Reason(s):

Classify ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Declassify on Reason

CINCSO FOR INTAFF; CINCLANT FOR POLAD; ROME FOR VATICAN

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, SOCI, SEDU, SWEL, AR, IT
SUBJECT: ITALIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS VISIT ARGENTINA

1. SUMMARY: A six-member dele###
1. SUMMARY: A SIX-MEMBER DELEGATION OF ITALIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS VISITED ARGENTINA DECEMBER 18-21 TO LOOK INTO THE ALLEGED PROBLEMS OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY (40 PERCENT OF ARGENTINA'S 28 MILLION PEOPLE). SINCE THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA (GOA) OPPOSED THE VISIT, THE DELEGATION WAS NOT RECEIVED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND HAD TO SETTLE FOR SESSIONS WITH THE MINISTERS OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ACTION. THE DELEGATION ALSO HELD MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS AND FAMILIES OF ITALIANS WHO DISAPPEARED. THE TWO MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES REFUSED TO MEET THE DELEGATION. THE DELEGATION SAID THAT IT WAS THE ADVANCE PARTY FOR A HIGH-LEVEL, LARGE DELEGATION FROM THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE LOWER HOUSE, WHICH WANTS TO VISIT ARGENTINA NEXT MARCH. NEITHER THE GOA NOR THE ITALIAN EMBASSY LOOKS FORWARD TO THE NEXT VISIT.
END SUMMARY.

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SECRET

2. (U) A SIX-MEMBER DELEGATION OF ITALIAN LEGISLATORS VISITED ARGENTINA DECEMBER 18-21. THE DELEGATION CONSISTED OF SUSANA AGNELLI (REPUBLICAN), NELLO AJELLO (RADICAL), MARTE FERRARI (SOCIALIST), GIANNI GIADRESKO (COMMUNIST), FERRUCCIO PISONI (CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT), AND MIRKO TREMAGLIA (NATIONAL RIGHT). PISONI, THE HEAD OF THE DELEGATION, EXPLAINED ON ARRIVAL IN BUENOS AIRES THAT THEY WERE NOT HERE TO "INVESTIGATE" THE CASES OF PEOPLE OF ITALIAN ORIGIN WHO HAD DISAPPEARED, BUT TO LEARN ABOUT THE PROBLEMS THAT THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY FACES IN ARGENTINA. THEY INFORMED THE PRESS THAT ONE OF THEIR AIMS WAS TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND EMPLOYMENT, AND THAT THE TRIP HAD BEEN PLANNED RIGHT AFTER THE END OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFLICT.

3. (U) THE DELEGATION MET WITH ARGENTINE EDUCATION MINISTER CAYETANO LICCIARDO, SOCIAL ACTION MINISTER ADOLFO NAVAJAS ARTAZA, NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER ADOLFO PEREZ ESQUIVEL, AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES CENTER (CELS), A HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION. THE PRESIDENT OF CELS TOLD THE PRESS THAT THEY WOULD DISCUSS THE MISSING-PEOPLE PROBLEM IN A GLOBAL SENSE AND NOT JUST THOSE OF ITALIAN NATIONALITY OR ORIGIN. THE VISITORS ALSO MET WITH MEMBERS OF TWO OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS, THE MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO AND THE RELATIVES OF PEOPLE HELD FOR POLITICAL REASONS. A MEETING WAS ALSO HELD WITH RELATIVES OF MISSING PEOPLE OF ITALIAN ORIGIN AT THE ITALIAN EMBASSY.

SECRET

4. (U) THE GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF ITALIAN FEDERATIONS IN ARGENTINA (FEDITALIA) ISSUED A STATEMENT ADDRESSED TO THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR HERE, IN WHICH FEDITALIA SAID THIS VISIT WAS "UNTIMELY", ADDING THAT "WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THE ARGENTINE SOCIETY AND ITS INSTITUTIONS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY FIND THE ADEQUATE SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM, WITHOUT FOREIGN INTERVENTION OR INTERFERENCE". THE ARGENTINE-CENTER OF VOLUNTEERS FOR THE FATHERLAND SENT A LETTER TO PRESIDENT BIGNONE IN WHICH IT "REPUDIATES THE VISIT TO OUR COUNTRY OF ITALIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS WITH THE PURPOSE OF INVESTIGATING ALLEGED DISAPPEARANCES".

5. (U) THE TWO MAJOR ARGENTINE POLITICAL PARTIES REBUFFED THE DELEGATION PUBLICLY. CARLOS CONTIN (RADICAL PARTY) AND DEOLINDO BITTEL (JUSTICIALIST PARTY) INDICATED SEPARATELY TO THE PRESS THAT THEY HAD REFUSED INVITATIONS TO MEET THE ITALIANS SINCE THEY CONSIDERED THEIR MISSION TO BE INAPPROPRIATE. THE FIVE-PARTY ALLIANCE (MULTIPARTIDARIA) ALSO REFUSED AN INVITATION FOR CONVERSATIONS WITH THE ITALIAN DELEGATION. ONLY TWO MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE ACCEPTED THE INVITATION, FORMER PRESIDENT ARTURO FRONDISI (INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY) AND OSCAR ALENDE (INTRANSIGENT PARTY). BOTH STATED THAT THEY HAD AGREED TO MEET WITH THE DELEGATION ONLY ON A PERSONAL BASIS. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS MAY HAVE MET WITH THE DELEGATION, BUT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS ARE OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE IN ARGENTINA.

6. COMMENT: THE VISIT WAS PAINFUL FROM THE WORD "GO," A WORD WHICH NEVER CAME FROM THE GOA. A MID-LEVEL ITALIAN DIPLOMAT HAD TOLD US TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE VISIT THAT THE GOA WAS SO AGAINST THE VISIT THAT HE PREDICTED NO DELEGATION WOULD COME, BUT TO SAVE FACE IN ITALY THERE WOULD NOT BE A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CANCELLATION OF THE TRIP. THUS, HE AND OTHERS WERE SURPRISED WHEN THE LEGISLATORS DECIDED TO COME ANYWAY; THE FOREIGN MINISTRY REFUSED TO RECEIVE THEM AT ANY LEVEL; SUCH TREATMENT IS ALMOST UNPRECEDENTED IN ARGENTINA.

7. THE VISITORS THUS HAD TO SETTLE FOR THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, ON THE PRETEXT OF INVESTIGATING THE POSSIBILITY OF TEACHING ITALIAN IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM, AND THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL ACTION, ON THE PRETEXT OF

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INVESTIGATING THE POSSIBILITY OF RECIPROCAL SOCIAL SECURITY AGREEMENTS. ACCORDING TO THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR, WHEN THE VISITORS RAISED THE ISSUE OF PEOPLE WHO HAD DISAPPEARED, THEY WERE TOLD BY THE EDUCATION MINISTER THAT HE WOULD CONVEY THEIR VIEWS TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES. THE SOCIAL ACTION MINISTER TOLD THEM THAT THIS WAS NOT HIS AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY.

8. [REDACTED] THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR ALSO TOLD US THAT THE DELEGATION SENT A LETTER TO THE MULTIPARTIDARIA EXPRESSING DISAPPOINTMENT OVER THAT ENTITY'S ATTITUDE, GIVEN THE COMMON INTEREST IN DEMOCRACY.

9. [REDACTED] RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE STRAINED BEFORE THE VISIT BECAUSE OF THE BROUHAHA IN ITALY OVER THE ISSUE OF THE DISAPPEARED AND CONTINUE IN THAT MODE. NEITHER THE GOA NOR OUR ITALIAN COLLEAGUES ARE EXACTLY LOOKING FORWARD TO THE MARCH VISIT OF AN EVEN BIGGER DELEGATION. THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR THINKS THERE IS A CHANCE IT WILL NOT TAKE PLACE. SHLAUDEMAN**

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